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Senate

The Senate met at 12 noon and was called to order by the Honorable CARL LEVIN, a Senator from the State of Michigan.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

O God, who does wondrous things, blessed be Your glorious Name forever. Remake us in Your image and bring our wandering, wayward hearts under Your control.

Lord, infuse our Senators with a love for You that will make their obedience willing and joyful. Astound them with Your limitless resources and supply all their needs from Your bounty. Keep them humble with the conviction that they can't breathe a breath, think a thought, speak a word, or perform an action without Your mercy and grace. Grant our supplications. We pray in Your sacred Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honorable CARL LEVIN led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read a communication to the Senate from the President pro tempore (Mr. INOUE).

The legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, April 23, 2012.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable CARL LEVIN, a Sen-

ator from the State of Michigan, to perform the duties of the Chair.

DANIEL K. INOUE,
President pro tempore.

Mr. LEVIN thereupon assumed the chair as Acting President pro tempore.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

SENATE CHALLENGES

Mr. REID. Mr. President, America has the best, brightest, and most dedicated workers in the world. All those workers need is a fair shot to succeed. But right now many workers in this country don't enjoy the same rights as the wealthy CEOs; that is, the right to negotiate the terms of their employment.

A new rule from the National Labor Relations Board will remove unnecessary obstacles to workers' rights to form a union. I solidly support this rule, and I urge my colleagues to vote tomorrow against the resolution of disapproval which strikes down this commonsense rule.

The new rule doesn't change or do anything to encourage unions, but it doesn't discourage them either. It just gives workers the ability to vote yes or no while minimizing the chance of intimidation and stalling.

Mr. President, tomorrow the Senate will vote on a number of amendments to a bipartisan postal reform bill. This important legislation will safeguard more than 8 million jobs of people who depend on a vibrant postal system. It will also protect postal customers—particularly elderly and disabled Americans and people who live in rural parts of this country.

I am pleased we reached an agreement to allow Senators to offer amendments to this bill. I hope once we work

through the amendments to the bill tomorrow we will see a strong bipartisan vote to modernize the Postal Service and save this important institution from insolvency. This institution is so important it is contained in our Constitution.

Once we pass postal reform tomorrow, as I expect we will, the Senate will move on to the consideration of another very important piece of legislation, the reauthorization of the Violence Against Women Act. Since its passage in 1994, this legislation has reduced the annual incidence of domestic violence by more than 50 percent.

Despite that incredible progress, we still have work to do to keep women and their families safe. Three women die in this country every day at the hands of abusive partners—on weekends, all days, no days off. For every victim who is killed there are nine more who narrowly escape death and are beaten savagely. It would be unacceptable to step back from our national commitment to stop violence and abuse now.

This legislation was the brainchild of Vice President JOE BIDEN when he was a Member of the Senate. It does very important work. For example, it allows communities to get support in setting up shelters for these women and their families to go in secret.

The legislation was unanimously reauthorized by the Senate in 2000 and 2005. This effort should be—and traditionally has been—above partisanship. I hope that proves to be the case again this year. This year it has 60 cosponsors and the support of 47 State attorneys general. I cannot imagine why my Republican colleagues would oppose such a worthy piece of legislation. I am hopeful and I am confident they won't.

By joining Democrats to pass this legislation, Republicans can help us send a clear message that this country doesn't tolerate domestic violence. If the Senate doesn't complete the work on this critical issue before we recess

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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